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THE POLITICAL MILL

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Kennedy Hardening Up the People

Now the American people are being blamed—for what? For not being willing to do what must be done to check the drive of world communism—to win the cold war. President Kennedy said as much in his recent address prepared for delivery in Chicago.

"Our greatest adversary," the President wrote, "is not the Russians. It is our own unwillingness to do what must be done." Why is the President so sure the American people are unwilling to do what must be done? In the first place, they have not been told what they must do—except to sacrifice.

Was the President referring only to financial sacrifices—to an outpouring of more and more money to be collected in taxes by the Federal Government? If so, the people have been put on notice. The Kennedy domestic program, if fully implemented by legislation for all kinds of social welfare programs, will demand more and more of the people's income. But even in his tax program the President has asked for certain remission of taxes to meet certain tax increases.

Of course, more money will be needed by the Federal Government for meeting the Russian challenge in space, in missiles and in their ability, along with their Chinese allies, to conduct "limited wars." Is the President sure that the people will oppose such expenditures if they have to pay for them? There has been no reason to believe that the Congress, or the people will resist necessary expenditures for the security of the United States.

Or was the President referring to an unwillingness on the part of the people to fight a war? The people quite naturally want peace—but over Castro. We didn't. As of today, no plan has been advanced by the Kennedy administration for dealing with this Communist government, the first set up in the Western Hemisphere, and only 90 miles from our shores. The Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee has been told there is no present plan for any operations against the Castro government—but that

if Castro moves against our naval base at Guantanamo, our armed forces will be used.

Senator Fulbright, chairman of the full Foreign Relations Committee has said the invasion was a blunder in which the White House, the CIA, the Defense Department and the State Department must bear responsibility. No one should expect the President to declare his intention of using armed force against Castro and the Communists in Cuba—certainly not until he is ready to do so—or until after the action has been taken. In the meantime, the American people are kept waiting to learn what, if anything, is to be done about Communist Cuba. There has been no unwillingness on the part of the people as a whole. There has been suspicion, however, that some of President Kennedy's advisers have taken a "hang your clothes on a hickory limb but don't go near the water" attitude which may have contributed to the Cuban fiasco.

Question of Prestige

The unfortunate part of this whole Cuban episode, beyond the fact it has resulted in a firmer Communist grip on the island, lies in the position it has left us in the eyes of the world, including the eyes of the other American republics. What is happening to the prestige of the United States abroad—prestige that was made an issue in the presidential campaign of 1960? Democratic spokesmen, including Mr. Kennedy, spoke again and again of the loss of prestige under the Eisenhower administration. Today, former President Eisenhower, former Vice President Nixon and other Republican leaders have assured President Kennedy they will support him.

President Kennedy served gallantly in the Second World War. Like his predecessor, Gen. Eisenhower, he is a strong advocate of peace. He realizes that we can lose the peace as well as war if we show weakness and unwillingness to do what must be done. The people will do neither if he provides the leadership of which he is capable.